

## *NOAA In Your Territory*

# **American Samoa**

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***NOAA*** is an agency that enriches life through science. Our reach goes from the surface of the sun to the depths of the ocean floor as we work to keep citizens informed of the changing environment around them. From daily weather forecasts, severe storm warnings, and climate monitoring to fisheries management, coastal restoration and supporting marine commerce, NOAA's products and services support economic vitality and affect more than one-third of America's gross domestic product. NOAA's dedicated scientists use cutting-edge research and high-tech instrumentation to provide citizens, planners, emergency managers and other decision makers with reliable information they need when they need it.

The following is a summary of NOAA facilities, staff, programs, or activities based in, or focused on, your state or territory: Starting with highlights, then by [congressional districts and cities or towns](#), and then [territory-wide programs](#).

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### **Highlights of NOAA in American Samoa**

[National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa & Tauese P.F.](#) Pago Pago

[Sunia Ocean Center](#)

[NMFS Office of Law Enforcement Field Office](#) Pago Pago

[Weather Service Office](#) Pago Pago

[Samoa Observatory](#) Tutuila Island

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### **Utulei**

#### **National Ocean Service (NOS) - [National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa](#)**

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa, formerly Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary, celebrates the natural and cultural resources of American Samoa in the cradle of Polynesia's oldest culture. The national marine sanctuary protects extensive coral reefs, deep water reefs, hydrothermal vent communities, rare marine archeological resources, and important fishing grounds. The national marine sanctuary is the only true tropical reef within the National Marine Sanctuary System and the only sanctuary site south of the equator. It is co-managed by the American Samoa Government where together programs such as education, outreach, research, science, monitoring, ocean services training, community livelihoods, partnerships and resource protection are implemented.

Originally designated by congress as Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary in 1986, NOAA designated an additional five protected areas within the sanctuary in 2012 and changed the name of the sanctuary to National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa. NOAA incorporated these additional areas in order to increase capacity for research opportunities, including those that can improve understanding of ecosystem threats and ways to limit impacts of such threats, and to fulfill the presidential mandate to incorporate the marine areas of Rose Atoll Marine National Monument into the sanctuary.

The Tauese P.F. Sunia Ocean Center opened in August 2012 and has welcomed more than 42,000 visitors to date. The state-of-the-art facility features educational exhibits and interactive learning tools to promote ocean awareness and encourage good marine stewardship. It is the only NOAA office that has a visitor center in American Samoa.

### **Pago Pago**

#### **National Ocean Service - [Tauese P.F. Sunia Ocean Center](#)**

The Tauese P.F. Sunia Ocean Center is a visitor center for the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa, featuring exciting exhibits for all ages. The Ocean Center is a learning, training and discovery center that celebrates the importance of cultural and natural ocean resources in American Samoa. The exhibits address the value of coral reefs, understanding the ocean ecosystems, how our culture ties into the management of coral reefs, as well as the natural and anthropogenic threats to our reefs. Free Admission (private and walk in tours).

#### **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) - [Office of Law Enforcement Field Office](#)**

NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement is the only U.S. conservation enforcement agency that is exclusively dedicated to Federal fisheries and marine resource enforcement. Its mission is to protect global marine resources by enforcing domestic laws, international treaties, and regulations dedicated to protecting wildlife, and their natural habitat. Our special agents and enforcement officers ensure compliance with these laws and take enforcement actions if there are violations. In addition, the Cooperative Enforcement Program gives OLE the ability to leverage its resources with the assistance of 27 coastal states and U.S. territorial marine conservation law enforcement agencies in supporting its Federal enforcement mission. Effective fisheries law enforcement is critical to creating a level playing field for U.S. fishermen and enabling sustainable fisheries to support all the communities throughout the Pacific Islands. The American Samoa field office, located in Pago Pago, is part of the Office of Law Enforcement's Pacific Islands Division which is headquartered in Honolulu, Hawaii.

#### **National Ocean Service (NOS) - [National Water Level Observation Network](#)**

The National Ocean Service (NOS) operates one long-term continuously operating tide station in American Samoa, which provides data and information on tidal datum and relative mean sea level trends, and is capable of producing real-time data for storm surge and tsunami warning. This station is located in Pago Pago and provides critical tsunami detection

functionality for tsunami warning in the Pacific Basin. The station is associated with a set of tidal benchmarks installed in the ground that is used to reference the height of the water levels and helps connect the water level to land.

**National Weather Service (NWS) - [Weather Service Office](#)**

The area of responsibility of NWS Pago Pago Weather Service Office (WSO) is the Territory of American Samoa and adjacent territorial waters. The WSO conducts surface and upper air observing programs and provides a full suite of watch, warning, advisory, and forecast products for the general public and marine communities. WSO Pago Pago is also responsible for coordination of its meteorological products with the Meteorological Service in the Independent State of Samoa.

**[Tutuila Island](#)**

**Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) - [Halocarbon Measurements](#)**

NOAA's Earth System Research Laboratory Global Monitoring Laboratory (ESRL/GML) operates a sampling network to measure the distribution and trends of the gases most responsible for human-caused depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer. Weekly samples are collected in high-pressure flasks at fixed locations. The air sample flasks are delivered to ESRL/GMD, located in Boulder, CO for analysis. Some locations conduct continuous surface measurements on site. Halocarbon measurements help determine the effectiveness of efforts to protect and restore the ozone layer - so it can protect us from the sun's ultraviolet radiation.

**Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) - [Ozone Measurements](#)**

NOAA's Earth System Research Laboratory Global Monitoring Laboratory (ESRL/GML) makes measurements of the column amounts of ozone between the earth's surface and the top of the atmosphere at a number of locations around the United States, including American Samoa. The observations are obtained with ground-based spectrometers that measure the attenuation by ozone of ultraviolet light. These observations represent NOAA global stratospheric ozone network and are used to track recovery of the stratospheric ozone layer in compliance with the USA Clean Air act of 1990. The integrated ozone amount is critical in determining the amount of ultraviolet radiation reaching the earth's surface. Excess ultraviolet radiation is responsible for human skin cancer and is also harmful to other biogenic organisms. Column ozone measurements monitor changes in the stratospheric ozone layer resulting from human-produced chlorine and bromine compounds that destroy ozone. With controls now in place on the manufacture and use of these ozone-destroying compounds, it will be important to monitor the ozone layer for the expected recovery and determine whether other factors such as long-term climate change are influencing this recovery.

**Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) - [American Samoa Atmospheric Baseline Observatory](#)**

The American Samoa Atmospheric Baseline Observatory (ABO) is one of four observatories operated by the NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, Global Monitoring Laboratory, located in Boulder, CO. The observatories are part of a global network of observatories that acquire long-term records of atmospheric gases, aerosol particles, and surface radiation to study the causes and consequences of change. The American Samoa ABO was established in 1974 and is located on the northeastern tip of Tutuila Island, on a ridge overlooking the South Pacific Ocean. It maintains monitoring programs in greenhouse and other trace gases, stratospheric ozone, atmospheric aerosols, solar radiation variability, and meteorological parameters.

**NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps (NOAA Corps) - [American Samoa/Antarctic Station Chief](#)**

The NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps stations an officer at the Samoa Observatory as Station Chief in support of the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, Earth System Research Laboratory, Global Monitoring Division. This officer oversees the daily management of administrative tasks, operational equipment calibration, rough data analysis, preparation of monthly reports, parts inventory and resupply, facility maintenance and upkeep, and public relations

interactions. They are also the shore-side contact for the NOAA Ships visiting the island during field-season port calls. This position rotates each year as the incumbent prepares to take over as Station Chief at the South Pole Observatory.

#### **National Ocean Service (NOS) – [National Coastal Resilience Fund](#)**

The National Coastal Resilience Fund is a partnership effort between NOAA and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to restore, increase, and strengthen natural infrastructure to protect coastal communities, while also enhancing habitat for fish and wildlife. In American Samoa, the NCRF awarded a project in FY20 to create a living shoreline on Tutuila to enhance the critical estuarine habitat in the adjacent Pala Lagoon and serve as a concrete demonstration of alternative erosion protection to traditional seawalls.

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#### **[Entire Territory](#)**

#### **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) - [Pacific Islands Regional Office](#) and [Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center](#)**

NMFS is responsible for the management, conservation, and protection of living marine resources within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. The Pacific Islands Region includes the waters surrounding American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands as well as the Pacific Remote Island Areas. It is the largest geographic area within NMFS jurisdiction, with a U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone of more than 1.7 million square nautical miles of ocean. Using the tools provided by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, NMFS monitors and assesses fish stocks, promotes sustainable fisheries, develops and ensures compliance with fisheries regulations, restores and protects habitats, and works to reduce wasteful fishing practices. Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act, NMFS regulates and conducts research supporting the recovery of protected marine species. NMFS also co-manages four marine national monuments in the Pacific Islands Region: Rose Atoll Marine National Monument, Marianas Trench Marine National Monument, Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, and Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. Regional Office staff in the American Samoa field office coordinate essential fish habitat reviews/consultations, oversee local fisheries Coral Reef Conservation Program efforts, participate in a wide variety of community partnerships, and review local Army Corps of Engineer permit applications. Staff also monitors activities of the U.S. purse seine fleet under the South Pacific Tuna Treaty. The American Samoa observer program also operates out of this office and places observers on longline fishery boats to obtain data on interactions with all protected species, record fish that are kept and discarded, and process selected specimen for life history information. The Regional Office also fosters sustainable aquaculture in the region. The regional aquaculture coordinator assists federal and state agencies with permitting and other activities. They also support aquaculture outreach and education, and work with industry, academia, and other stakeholders on a variety of regional marine aquaculture topics. Science Center field office staff administer scientific research and monitoring programs that support the domestic and international conservation and management of living marine resources. Staff provide logistical and coordination support for all science center research in the area and outreach support to the American Samoa Biological Sampling Program and the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument's science program.

#### **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) - [National Marine Mammal Stranding Network](#) and [John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program](#)**

The National Marine Mammal Stranding Network and its trained professionals respond to dead or live marine mammals in distress that are stranded, entangled, out of habitat or otherwise in peril. Our long-standing partnership with the Network provides valuable environmental intelligence, helping NOAA establish links among the health of marine mammals, coastal ecosystems, and coastal communities as well as develop effective conservation programs for marine mammal populations in the wild. There is one stranding network member in the territory.

NOAA Fisheries funds eligible members of the Stranding Network through the competitive John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program. In FY20, 43 competitive grants were awarded nationwide for a total of \$3.7 million. No grant applications were received from American Samoa in FY20.

**National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and National Ocean Service (NOS) - [Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program](#)**

NOAA's Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program (DARRP) assesses and restores habitat, fisheries, protected species and recreational uses that have been harmed by oil spills, chemical releases, and ship groundings. Working with federal, state, and tribal entities, and responsible parties, we have recovered funding from responsible parties for restoration of critical habitats, fisheries, protected species and recreational uses nationwide. These projects promote recovery of the ecosystem and provide economic benefits from tourism, recreation, green jobs, coastal resiliency, property values and quality of life.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) - [U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System \(Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System\)](#)**

The U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System, or IOOS®, is a federally and regionally coordinated observing system with 17 interagency and 11 regional partners. The System addresses regional and national needs for coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes data and information. This includes gathering and disseminating regional observations; data management; modeling and analysis; education and outreach; and research and development. IOOS regional partners provide coordination with regional stakeholders while contributing data and other outputs to the national system. The Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System (PacIOOS) empowers ocean users and stakeholders throughout the Pacific Islands, by providing accurate and reliable coastal and ocean information, tools, and services that are easy to access and use. Fishermen, commercial operators, surfers, resource managers, scientists, and many others rely on PacIOOS' real-time, model, and archival ocean information to make well-informed decisions and to enhance our understanding of the Pacific Ocean. PacIOOS is one of 11 regional associations of the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System. Its region spans across the U.S. Pacific Islands, including the State of Hawai'i, the U.S. Territories and Commonwealth, and the Freely Associated States.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) - OR&R [Pacific Islands Environmental Response Management Application](#)**

Assessing important spatial information and designing successful restoration projects rely upon interpreting and mapping geographic information, including the location, duration, and impacts from oil spills, other hazardous materials, or debris released into the environment. Pacific Islands Environmental Response Management Application (ERMA®) is an online mapping tool that integrates both static and real-time data, such as Environmental Sensitivity Index (ESI) maps, ship locations, weather, and ocean currents, in a centralized, easy-to-use format for environmental responders and decision makers. Pacific Islands ERMA covers the Hawaiian Islands and outlying territories. ERMA staff continued to work closely with Federal and State agencies for drills, hurricane response, and incidents. Maintained habitat data for sensitive species. Ensured data was kept up-to-date and data collection methods were kept consistent.

**National Weather Service (NWS) - [Cooperative Observer Program Sites](#)**

The National Weather Service (NWS) Cooperative Observer Program (COOP) is truly the Nation's weather and climate observing network of, by and for the people. More than 10,000 volunteers take observations on farms, in urban and suburban areas, National Parks, seashores, and mountaintops. The data are representative of where people live, work and play. The COOP was formally created in 1890 under the NWS Organic Act to provide observational meteorological data, usually consisting of daily maximum and minimum temperatures, snowfall, and 24-hour precipitation totals, required

to define the climate of the United States and to help measure long-term climate changes, and to provide observational meteorological data in near real-time to support forecast, warning and other public service programs of the NWS. The data are also used by other federal (including the Department of Homeland Security), state and local entities, as well as private companies (such as the energy and insurance industries). In some cases, the data are used to make billions of dollars' worth of decisions. There are 17 COOP sites on American Samoa.

**National Weather Service (NWS) - [NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards Transmitters](#)**

NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR) is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information directly from the nearest National Weather Service (NWS) forecast office. NWR broadcasts official NWS warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Working with the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) Emergency Alert System, NWR is an "All Hazards" radio network, making it the single source for comprehensive weather and emergency information. In conjunction with federal, state, and local emergency managers and other public officials, NWR also broadcasts warning and post-event information for all types of hazards – including natural (such as earthquakes or avalanches), environmental (such as chemical releases or oil spills), and public safety (such as AMBER alerts or 911 Telephone outages). Known as the "Voice of NOAA's National Weather Service," NWR is provided as a public service by the NWS. NWR includes 1,100 transmitters covering all 50 states, adjacent coastal waters, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the U.S. Pacific Territories. There are two NWR transmitters in American Samoa.

**NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP)**

The NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP) leads national and international efforts to research, prevent, and reduce the impacts of marine debris. The program supports marine debris removal, prevention, and research projects in partnership with state and local agencies, tribes, non-governmental organizations, academia, and industry. The MDP Pacific Islands Regional Coordinator supports coordination efforts with regional stakeholders, provides support to grant-funded projects, tracks progress of projects, and conducts regional marine debris outreach to local audiences. Building off a previous research project that conducted an ecological risk assessment for microplastics in seafood in American Samoa, the Arizona Board of Regents on behalf of Arizona State University will identify and implement culturally appropriate and sustainable alternatives to plastic clamshell and foam take-out food containers, plastic cups, and plastic carrier bags in at least eight local food establishments and convenience stores in American Samoa. The project will also initiate long-term behavioral change through intensive community outreach and media campaigns, and the implementation of a new "plastic-free food provider" recognition program for businesses and community groups. The MDP is currently expanding its partnership and involvement in this territory, including the collaborative development of a marine debris emergency response guide.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) – [National Coastal Zone Management Program](#)**

Through a unique federal-state partnership, NOAA's Office for Coastal Management works with the American Samoa Department of Commerce to implement the National Coastal Zone Management Program in American Samoa. NOAA provides the state coastal management program with financial and technical assistance to further the goals of the Coastal Zone Management Act and ensure coastal waters and lands are used in a balanced way to support jobs, reduce use conflicts, and sustain natural resources. The office also provides a regionally focused staff member to serve as the liaison between NOAA and the American Samoa Coastal Program.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) – [Digital Coast](#)**

The Digital Coast is a focused information resource developed to meet the unique needs of coastal communities. Developed and maintained by NOAA's Office for Coastal Management, content comes from hundreds of organizations, including federal, state, and local agencies, plus private sector and non-profit contributors. The Digital Coast website



provides not only site-specific coastal data, but also related the tools, training, and information needed to make these data useful for coastal decision makers.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) - [Coral Reef Conservation Program](#)**

NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program brings together multidisciplinary expertise from over 30 NOAA offices and partners to protect, conserve, and restore coral reef resources. The program focuses on three threats to coral reefs - climate change, unsustainable fishing practices, and land-based sources of pollution - as well as coral reef restoration. In response to identified threats and management priorities developed by coral reef managers in American Samoa, the program invests in efforts to maintain and improve the status of fish stocks, improve coastal watershed quality, plan and mitigate the effects of global climate change, and promote collaboration between environmental agencies. Examples of projects in the territory include reef fish life history studies to inform fisheries regulations, coral reef ecosystem assessments for watershed management planning, and documenting and mapping the exceptionally large and old colonies of coral. The Coral Reef Conservation Program liaison is located in Pago Pago.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) – [National Coral Reef Management Fellowship](#)**

The National Coral Reef Management Fellowship Program is a partnership between Nova Southeastern University's National Coral Reef Institute, NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program, the U.S. Department of Interior Office of Insular Affairs, and the U.S. Coral Reef All Islands Committee. The program recruits Coral Reef Management Fellows for the seven U.S. coral reef jurisdictions, including American Samoa. The Fellow for American Samoa is working with the Coral Reef Advisory Group and partners to conduct coral restoration trials in the village of Aua and to identify and reduce land-based sources of pollution and implement best management practices in the village of Fagasa.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) – [Regional Geodetic Advisor](#)**

The Regional Geodetic Advisor is a National Ocean Service (NOS) employee that resides in a region and serves as a liaison between the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) and its public, academic and private sector constituents within their assigned region. NGS has a Regional Geodetic Advisor stationed in Honolulu, Hawaii serving the Pacific region including American Samoa. The Geodetic Advisor provides training, guidance and assistance to constituents managing geospatial activities that are tied to the National Spatial Reference System (NSRS), the framework and coordinate system for all positioning activities in the Nation. The Geodetic Advisor serves as a subject matter expert in geodesy and regional geodetic issues, collaborating internally across NOS and NOAA to ensure that all regional geospatial activities are properly referenced to the NSRS.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) - Students for [Zero Waste Week](#)**

Students are inviting their local communities to "Go Green and Think Blue" by joining them in the annual *Students for Zero Waste Week campaign*. During this campaign led by the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, students focus on reducing land-based waste in order to protect the health of local marine environments. These young leaders are raising awareness of how single-use plastic and other types of litter affect the health of local watersheds, national marine sanctuaries, and the ocean. In addition, some schools are looking at ways to reduce their energy use on campus with hopes of raising awareness of how the burning of fossil fuels also impacts the health of the ocean.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) - [Navigation Manager](#)**

NOAA's navigation managers work directly with pilots, port authorities, and recreational boating organizations in Pacific Islands. They help identify the navigational challenges facing marine transportation in Delaware Maryland and provide NOAA's resources and services that promote safe and efficient navigation. Navigation managers are on call to provide expertise and NOAA navigation response coordination in case of severe coastal weather events or other marine

emergencies. The Office of Coast Survey has a navigation manager in Seattle, WA to support mariners and stakeholders in the Pacific Northwest and Pacific Islands region.

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